

Prepared Statement
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Mr. Speaker, members of the House and Senate. It's a great honor for me to stand here today and address this group that has been such an important part of Marshall Space Flight Center's success since it began in 1960.

In 2010, on Marshall's 50th anniversary, the State Tourism Department honored Marshall with a historic marker as part of its "Year of Small Towns and Downtowns." We are proud to be a part of Alabama's storied history alongside Alabama's farms and steel towns, railroad depots, football heroes and NASCAR legends, the Civil War and civil rights.

The Marshall Center and Alabama made history and changed the world by helping put the first Americans in space, building the Saturn V moon rocket, the Space Shuttle, and the International Space Station that orbits the Earth today. And that's only a snapshot of accomplishments that literally fill volumes of technical histories.

This year, we are commemorating the 100th birthday of Dr. Wernher von Braun, Marshall's first center director who was so instrumental in the technical management and the public support for our victory in the race to

the moon. The technologies, the organizations, the companies, and the inspiration created by that effort continue to power our nation today.

Dr. Von Braun is famous for his great leadership that went beyond the technical realm. He understood that Marshall could not succeed without the support of the community, the state and the nation. It was his inspiration and this legislature's support that led to the creation of the University of Alabama in Huntsville with a student population today of more than 7,000, and the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, the state's top admission-charging tourist attraction.

Dr. Von Braun spoke to a rare joint session of the state legislature in 1961 to urge them to earmark money for the creation of a research institute that could support Marshall's work. I believe by now the city of Huntsville, UA Huntsville, and Marshall Space Flight Center have proven their value many times over to Alabama.

Marshall is still making history and making an impact on Alabama and our world. We continue to be a powerful engine for exploration, discovery, science, technology, education, and economic vitality. For more than half a century, we have embodied the values of determination, achievement, and

a thirst for knowledge that made this nation great. We are still a symbol of this nation's greatness and its promise.

Today, Marshall supports NASA and the nation with more than 125 unique and specialized facilities and labs, even as we adapt to work smarter and more affordably, recognizing the times we live in now. We're one of NASA's most diverse centers, managing work that ranges from launch vehicles to human health, to instruments and spacecraft that study the Earth, the solar system and the universe.

The team that developed the Saturn V moon rocket in the 1960s is today developing NASA's new Space Launch System that will support our nation's critical aerospace industry and take us exploring again beyond Earth's orbit with people and robots in ways that aren't possible today.

The team that built and operated the Skylab space workshop in the 1970s helped design and build the International Space Station and today oversees science operations and life support equipment aboard a permanent laboratory in space the size of a football field where nations can work together peacefully.

Our scientists are using satellite data to help understand weather patterns and use our resources more wisely.

We're lending our world-class expertise and facilities to commercial industry as it works to make spaceflight cheaper and make our domestic launch business more competitive in a global market place.

Our respected rocket team at Marshall was recently asked by Washington to provide important policy inputs to lawmakers by leading a multi-agency study on the nation's rocket propulsion future, which will be critical to our economy and national defense.

Nowhere is Marshall's impact felt more than right here in Alabama. Our past accomplishments and our future successes are intertwined with those of the state – a fact that every state with a NASA center recognizes.

Marshall had a roughly \$2.9 billion economic impact in Alabama in 2009, the last time we did a full study. That included \$42 million in local and state sales and property taxes. We did more than \$800 million dollars' worth of business with Alabama companies last year. Nearly 25 percent were small businesses.

Our highly skilled technical workforce is a unique resource to have in Alabama. As the third largest employer in Huntsville, we have approximately 5,500 government and contract employees with good paying jobs. More than 90 percent of our employees have a 4-year degree or

higher, compared to about a third of the population nationwide. It's said everyone in Huntsville is from somewhere else, but we're all part of the same community, and last year we gave back directly to the community a record \$750,000 through the Combined Federal Campaign, the government version of United Way.

We believe strongly that our children are the future of Marshall and Alabama. We reached about 12,000 students last year through our many efforts to encourage and inspire them to stay in school and seek careers in the math, science and technology fields that are more important than ever to our nation. That's an incredible resource to have in our state as we continue to build for our future.

I know that space exploration may seem far away from the cities and towns that you all call home, but it's really as close as that cellphone in your pocket or the GPS in your car.

We have more than 250 ongoing collaborative agreements with industry and academia that leverage our unique capabilities in propulsion, space systems, science, and technology for the benefit of all Americans.

Technology created or supported by the work at Marshall to purify water on the space station has been adapted to provide clean drinking

water to communities after disasters or to our troops in the field. It continues to be used to do vision screening tests on thousands of students every year. Technology that originated with our rocket engine research recently found its way into firefighting equipment that can stop a blaze 7 times faster using 16 times less water than a conventional fire hose. There have been hundreds of examples just like that since Marshall was created.

When an explosion aboard an offshore oil rig in 2010 spilled millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf, NASA was part of the national response, using satellites and aircraft to track and study the oil spill and help direct the containment and cleanup. The person who headed NASA's response was on detail from Marshall.

When the tornados came through the state in 2011, Marshall scientists used satellite data to track the path of the destruction and support disaster recovery efforts.

In fairness, Marshall can't take all the credit. As Dr. Von Braun knew when he spoke to this body in 1961, it takes different groups working together to accomplish great things. Marshall is a symbol of pride for Alabama because what this legislature has done to nurture industry, infrastructure and education to make us the kind of place that attracts the

best people, the best companies, and the kind of ideas that have kept this state moving forward. For that, we thank you. We hope our partnership with Alabama will continue to flourish in these challenging times.

As the governing body charged with protecting and nurturing our state's many cherished resources, I urge you to consider Marshall Space Flight Center's work – our economic impact – our expertise and capabilities – and the pride in our contributions to this nation – as no less valuable to the future of Alabama than our waterways and coastline – our farms and auto industry – our educational institutions – and our culture.

Of all the stars that fell on Alabama, Marshall continues to be among the brightest.

With your support, Marshall Space Flight Center pledges to keep making history every day, exploring space, learning more about our planet, inspiring the youth who will take our place, improving the quality of life for all, and making Alabama proud.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.